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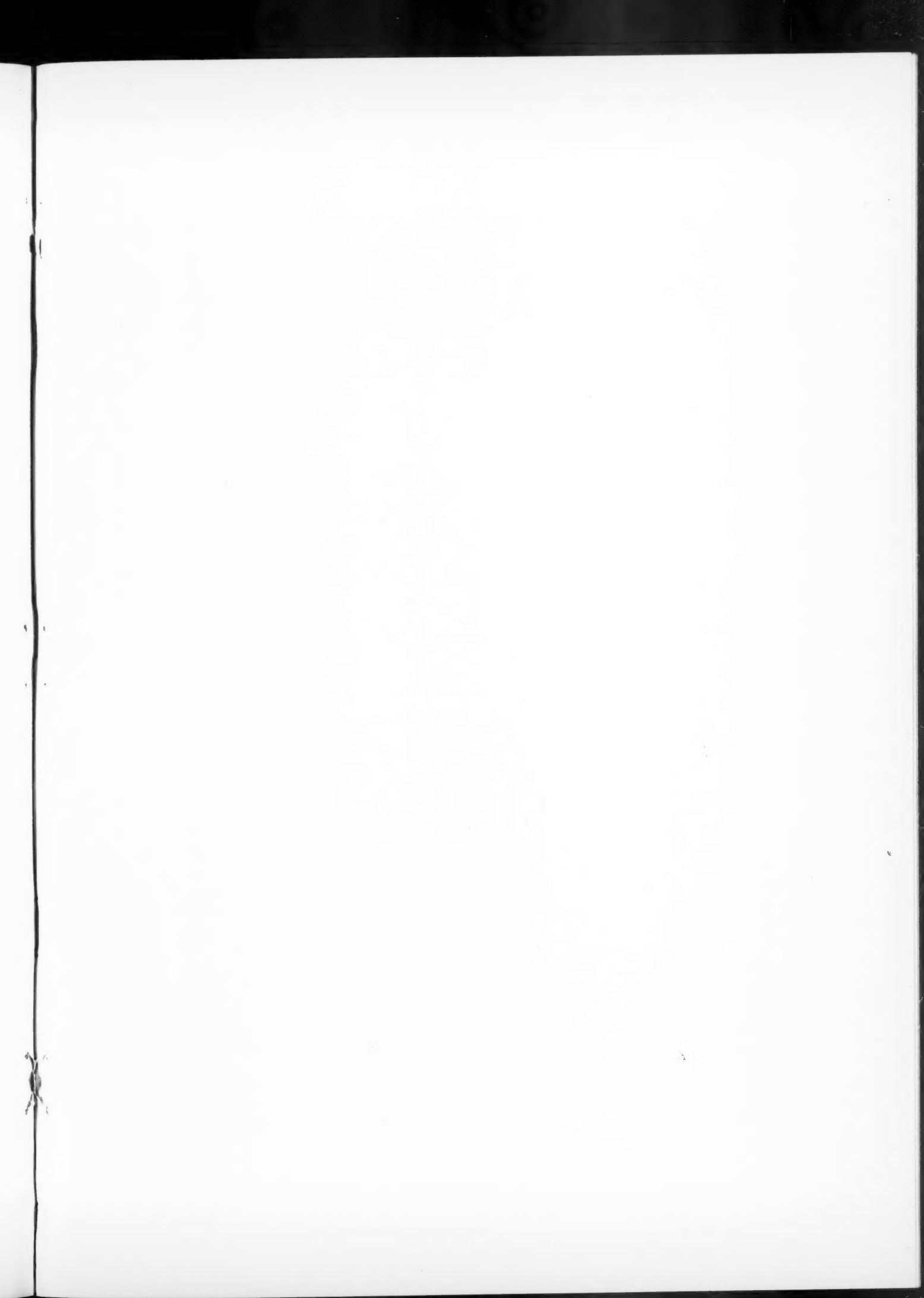
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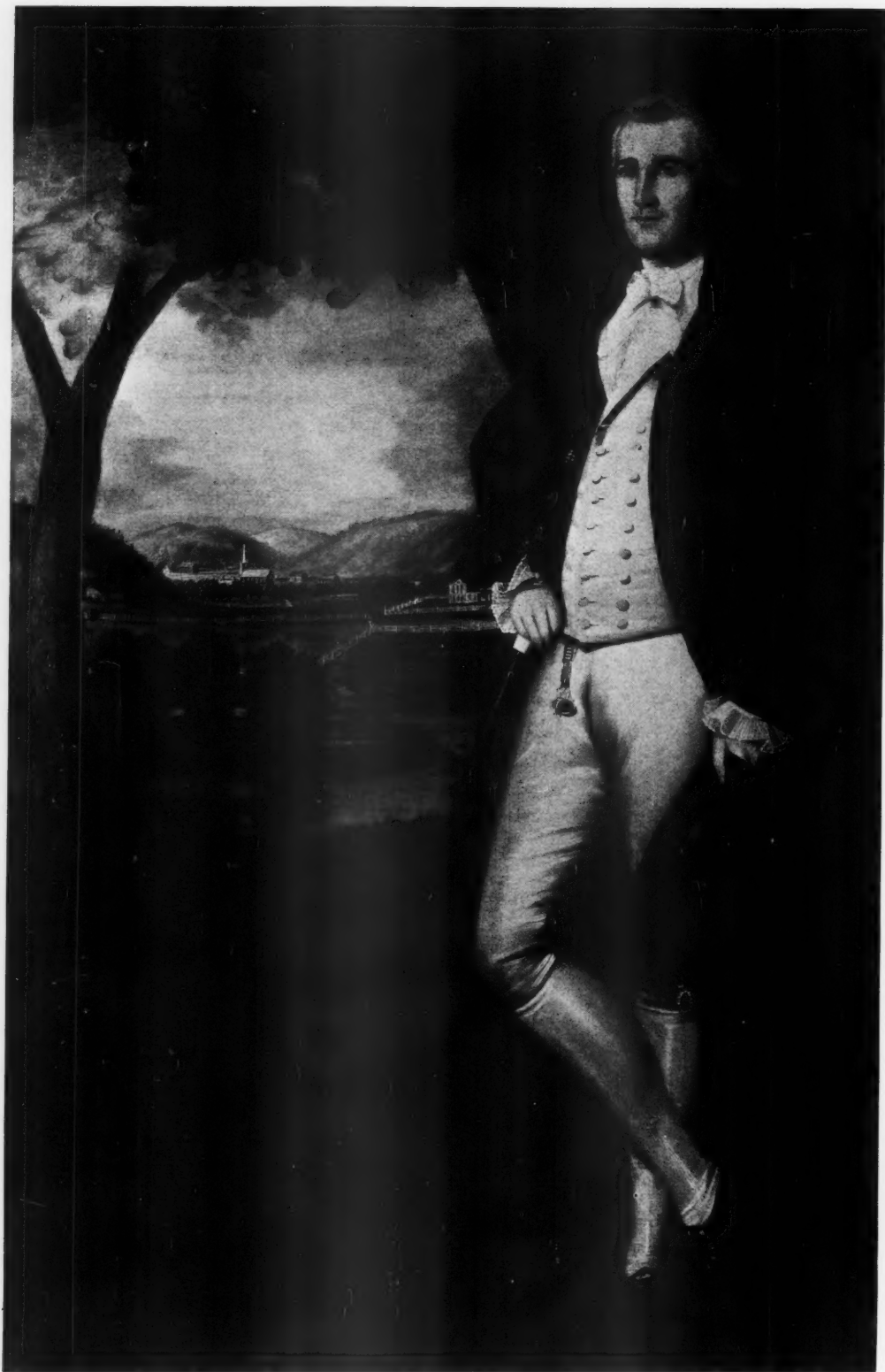
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RALPH EARL: AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY
CONNECTICUT PORTRAIT PAINTER

BY FREDERIC FAIRCHILD SHERMAN

Westport, Conn.

Ralph Earl, the artist, son of Ralph and Phebe Whittemore Earl, was born, May 11, 1751 at Shrewsbury or Leicester, Massachusetts, and a direct descendant in the sixth generation of the first Ralph Earl, who came to this country from England in the seventeenth century and as early as 1638 is recorded as being in Newport, Rhode Island. The ancestral line is Ralph 1, William 2, Ralph 3, William 4, Ralph 5 and Ralph 6, the artist, who is the subject of this article. The first Ralph and his son William resided in Rhode Island, the others in Shrewsbury or Leicester, Massachusetts, except the Ralph with whom we are concerned, most of whose life, at least after he was grown to manhood, seems to have been spent as an itinerant painter working in various parts of the state of Connecticut, save for the few years he spent in England in the early 1780's—where he studied with Benjamin West, painted the King, George III, and exhibited at the Royal Academy, of which he was made a mem-

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ber in 1783—and several years in the late 1780's in New York City. Practically nothing is known of his early life or of the influences which determined the choice of portrait painting for a career. He was already making likenesses in Connecticut in the early 1770's and must have gone to Lexington in 1774, if he made the five pictures of the historic battles, which his friend Amos Doolittle later engraved and published in New Haven, December 13, 1775. These paintings are mentioned by Dunlap in 1834, by French in his "Art and Artists in Connecticut" in 1879 and latterly by practically all those who have written about the artist since. As the friendship of Earl and Doolittle has been rather emphasized it appears somewhat singular that Doolittle should have neglected in the advertisement of his engravings to make any mention of their being from pictures by Earl, or to have added the artist's name on the plates. These canvases, which are said to have been of generous proportions, as were all of his works, have been lost or at least have disappeared. Doolittle's engravings from them, his first upon copper, may very possibly hardly do them justice.

The painter married in 1774 at Worcester, Massachusetts, Sarah Gates, by whom he had two children, Phebe, born January 25, 1775 and John, born May 13, 1777. It is likely that Earl had already deserted his wife at the latter date for she had returned to Worcester, her former home, and he was probably still in New Haven, where they had lived in the meantime. That she eventually divorced him is certain for in 1786 she married Oliver Pierce and he had already married in England, presumably in 1784, Anna Whitesides, his portrait of whom, with that date, is now in the possession of Mr. Herbert Lee Pratt. Though he is reputed to have been a pupil of Joshua Reynolds there is no proof of that being a fact, nor is there in his portraiture any indication whatever that I can detect that he ever studied with Reynolds or was in any sense influenced by that master's style. On the other hand we have unimpeachable authority for the fact of his being a pupil of Benjamin West, for an announcement, dated February 24th, 1796, in the Litchfield (Conn.) Monitor, the publisher of which, Thomas Collier, seems to have been a personal friend, reads:

"Arrived in town a few days since, from New York, Mr. Ralph Earle, the celebrated Portrait Painter; who holds rank with the most distinguish'd pupils of the great West. His paintings will do honor to any country, in any age."

His first portraits were painted in his early 'twenties' in Hartford and New Haven and date from about 1772 to 1777. The full-length

seated figure of the Hon. Roger Sherman at the Yale Art Gallery the late Thomas T. Sherman, son of General Sherman, wrote "as a matter of record was painted about 1775", and inherent evidences of a technical nature in the picture itself substantiate that dating. These early portraits he neither signed nor dated and indeed I have yet to find one painted before his return from abroad that is signed. For this reason it is not always easy or even possible to determine just where they were executed. The Rev. Nathaniel Taylor and that of his wife might be thought to have been painted in New Milford, Connecticut, where he was the pastor of the Congregational Church from 1749 to 1800—and where the artist later painted many likenesses—were it not for the fact that there is no other evidence of Earl's having worked there at all prior to 1789 and for the further fact that the Rev. Nathaniel Taylor was also from 1774 until his death in 1800 a trustee of Yale College. As both canvases are typical examples of the artist's early work the inference is inescapable that they were in reality painted sometime between 1774 and 1778 in New Haven, when the Taylors were in that city in connection with the clergyman's duties as a trustee of the college. Other portraits of the 1770's include according to my dating the Colonel George Wyllys and the Colonel Samuel Talcott, both of Hartford, Connecticut, and dated by Mr. George Dudley Seymour as late as 1790 or 1791. The Mary Wyllys Pomeroy which resembles Earl's typical product in general appearance, is inferior technically even to his youthful performance and must I think be attributed to some undetermined imitator of his style.

Returning from England presumably in 1786 the artist evidently landed at New York and for a time worked in that city, where he was imprisoned for debt and painted while incarcerated a number of portraits, including one of Mrs. Alexander Hamilton. In 1789 he painted in New Milford, Major Daniel Boardman and his brother, Elijah Boardman and the wife of the latter and in the neighboring town of Litchfield the Rev. Judah Champion, the pastor of the Congregational Church. In 1792 he executed the large double portrait of Chief Justice Oliver Ellsworth and his wife, probably in Windsor, Connecticut, where they lived and again in 1796 he is back in New Milford and Litchfield painting the Sherman Boardmans, the Colonel Nathaniel Taylors and the Judson Canfields.

In the Litchfield Monitor, dated May 18, 1796, we find the following illuminating announcement:

"Mr. Ralph Earle, the celebrated Portrait Painter is now at New Milford; where he will probably reside for some time.

As we profess a friendship for Mr. Earle and are desirous that the Public avail themselves of the abilities of this able artist, we feel pleasure in making this communication, many gentlemen in this vicinity having been disappointed of his services, and several of our friends being driven to accept the paltry daubs of assuming pretenders. Mr. Earle's price for a Portrait of full length is Sixty Dollars, the smaller size Thirty Dollars; the Painter finding his own support and materials,—Application by letter or otherwise, will be transmitted to Mr. Earle from this office, or the Post-master at New Milford will take charge of all letters addressed to Mr. Earle."

The remuneration for his work seems perhaps entirely inadequate today, but when it is remembered that actual money was worth then from fifty to a hundred times what it is now—very little being in circulation—and that most commodities as well as labor was paid for 'in kind', a truer conception of his earnings is arrived at. Most of the wealth of the time was measured in land, crops and live stock, and in 1797, the year after Earle painted the later likenesses in New Milford, the richest man in that town was assessed for \$1037.00.

The double portrait of Elizabeth and Martha Paine which is now at the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence is said to have been painted in Charleston, South Carolina, on the occasion of a visit of the former to her aunt Martha, the wife of Capt. Thomas Paine, U. S. N., who was stationed in that city. If that is correct the picture is unquestionably by James Earle, the brother of Ralph, who studied in London and returning settled in South Carolina. If painted by Ralph Earle it must have been painted in Rhode Island at about the time of Elizabeth Paine's marriage to Samuel W. Bridgman, October 20, 1798. The picture resembles in a way his works of about that date but there is no evidence whatever that I can discover of his ever having been in South Carolina or in the south at all at any time and certainly not after his return from abroad. Prior to his study with Benjamin West he was entirely incapable of painting with anything like such assurance nor did he paint anything so attractive.

H. W. French in his book of Connecticut artists was the first to record Earle as a miniature painter and upon the basis of his statement that "in 1771 he was painting miniatures and life-size portraits" both Mr. R. T. H. Halsey in the Metropolitan Museum Bulletin of May 1906 and Theodore Bolton in his book of "Early American Portrait Painters in Miniature" list him as a miniaturist, the latter however adding that he



RALPH EARL: MRS. SHERMAN BOARDMAN

The New Milford Historical Society, New Milford, Conn.



RALPH EARL: MRS. NATHANIEL W. TAYLOR, Ind.

'knows nothing of portraits in miniature he is said to have painted'. It is true of course that at the period no portrait painter could afford to neglect work in miniature and that very few of them remain miniatures by whom have not already been discovered. I have recently come upon a diminutive oval ivory in a plain gold locket, measuring $1\frac{3}{4}$ by $1\frac{5}{16}$ inch, which establishes I think beyond question of doubt the accuracy of French's statement that this artist also worked in miniature. The example to which I refer pictures Mary Anna Whiting, who married Elijah Boardman of New Milford, in her low-neck, rose-red, wedding dress and was presumably painted in that town at the time of her marriage in 1792. It is still in the possession of her descendants. The technical detail and general effect of this little ivory is so exactly identical to that of the Lieutenant Augustine Taylor miniature at the New Milford Historical Society that I am now entirely convinced that it also was painted by Earl, though in 1929 I included it in my monograph on John Ramage as a work from his hand. That it is by Earl seems entirely natural from the fact that his father and mother, the Rev. Nathaniel Taylor and his wife and both his brothers, Colonel Nathaniel and Colonel William Taylor and their wives were painted in oils by the Connecticut artist. Broadly speaking the coloring in these ivories is neither so pure nor so brilliant as in Ramage's miniatures and furthermore there is a sense of stiffness in the pose which one does not encounter in that artist's work.

Earl's portraiture of the early period, when he was a very young man and prior to his study with Benjamin West, while competent was hardly distinguished. He was greatly indebted to that master for a much improved technic and a new proficiency in the handling of his brush as well as for a more sensitive and subtle use of color. As a result his later creations acquaint us with an assurance of execution and an understanding of effective composition which is absent from his earlier work. His portraits have it is true their faults. One of the most common is that the hands in them are generally very badly drawn, a fault however that one finds in the works of many other portrait painters. His poses are sometimes conventional, his figures sometimes immobile to a degree suggestive of wax effigies. Nor was his technic the development or creation of a pioneering genius. It became during his study in West's studio a serviceable and finished formula however, which he employed consistently without improvement or alteration to the end of his life. Considering the fact that after his return from London he settled again in Connecticut and continued to practise as an itinerant portrait painter away from the centers of artistic progress and culture, his product is surprising

and notable for its undeniable distinction. The life-size full-length of Major Daniel Boardman is superlatively attractive in color and really impressive in design and could hang without prejudice beside similar work from the hands of Morse, Trumbull or even Stuart, the greatest of native born artists, all of whom profited by being constantly in touch with the best pictures that were being exhibited in the great cities and by sharing the knowledge of art as developed by their contemporaries. The total effect of his three-quarter-length seated figures is generally enlivened by the simple and characteristic expedient of picturing his sitters by an open window, through which one gets an attractive glimpse of landscape as in the Sherman Boardman and Colonel William Taylor. In the double portrait of Chief Justice Oliver Ellsworth and his wife the landscape includes the Ellsworth homestead, and in the Major Boardman the town in which he lived is pictured. Further than that the furnishings; chairs, chests and the like in the interiors where they are painted give us an historically accurate idea of the appearance of the inside of a late eighteenth century American home, just as the dress of his sitters pictures faithfully the mode of the time. As for the more important question of his abilities in the matter of getting a likeness at once characteristic and truthful, his portraits themselves supply ample evidence. One observes in the shape of the heads in the Colonel William and Colonel Nathaniel Taylor canvases the resemblance in both to that of their father, the Rev. Nathaniel; and similarly in the Daniel and Elijah Boardman heads the resemblance to Sherman Boardman's, their father. Facial expression he utilizes in each instance to distinguish individuality of character, emphasizing the delicate and subtle differentiations as of humor, pride or humanity which mark even those most closely related. In the picturing of fabrics and draperies and all the minutia of dress he was exceptionally proficient and his people are the very mould of fashion, with every slightest detail from a gentleman's cut-steel buckles, gold watch-fob and long bone handled cane to a lady's high feather head-dress, mitts and figured lace fichu drawn and painted with really exquisite finesse.

The charming landscape vistas seen through the windows whereby his sitters are generally placed, always quite freely and broadly brushed, probably led to the painting of his few landscapes proper. The early example at the Litchfield Historical Society, presumably executed in the 1790's, was presented to Mrs. Samuel Canfield of New Milford, with whom he staid when doing the New Milford portraits, because he thought he had paid her too long a visit on that occasion. This canvas

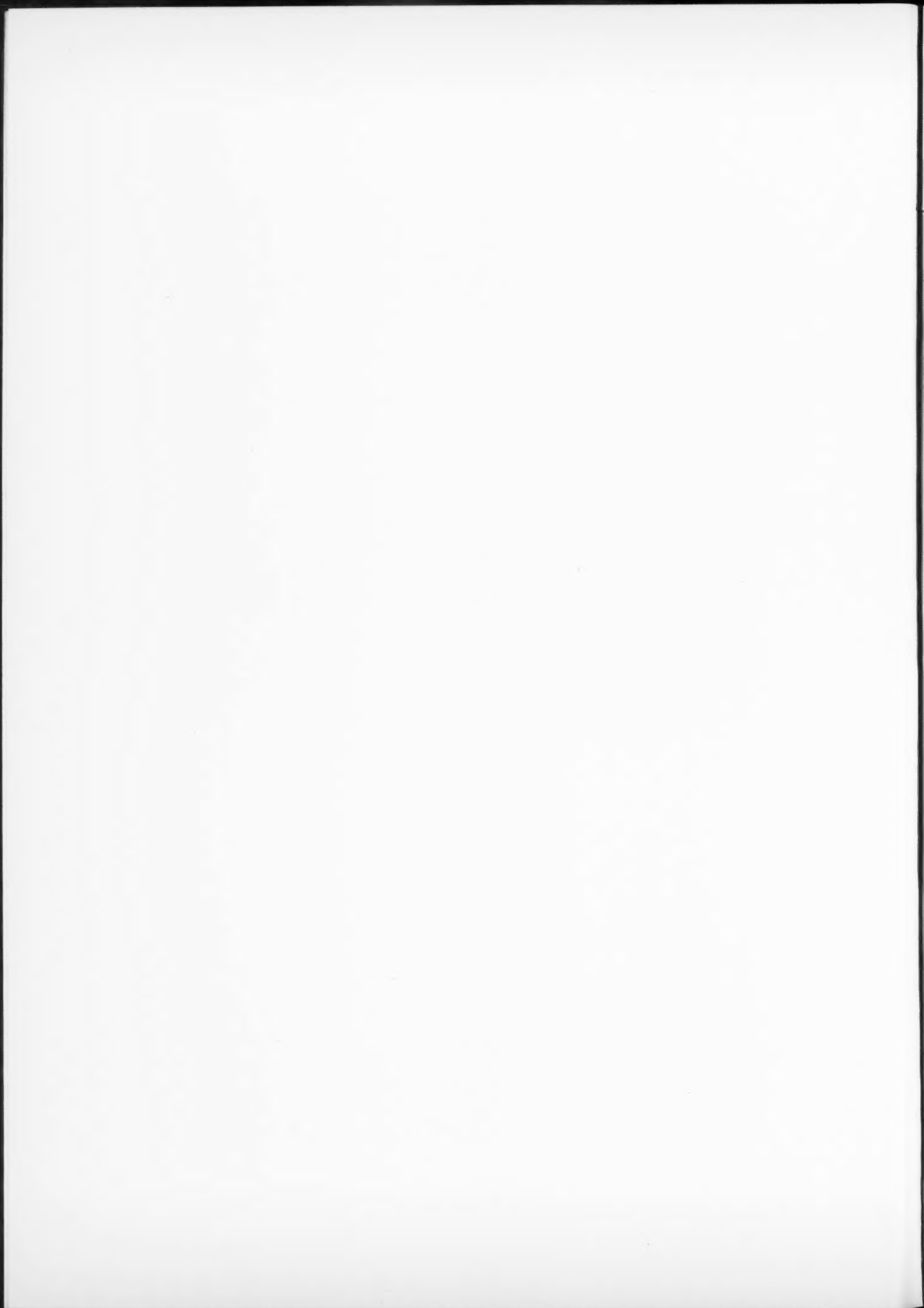


RALPH EARL: PHILLO RUGGLES

The Litchfield Historical Society, Litchfield, Conn.

RALPH EARL: MRS. BENJAMIN TALLMADGE (MARY FLOYD)





is not the equal in any sense as a composition of the somewhat later View East from Leicester Hills, dated 1801, which seems to me to contain the germ of an art that might possibly have eventuated in something of primitive distinction had he not died almost immediately following its completion. He painted also at least one other landscape, a view of the Ruggles Homestead at Still River, near New Milford. Taking into account the pertinent fact that these pictures predate by some years the earliest productions of the American landscape school proper, one realizes somewhat more fully the measure of their importance in the history of artistic development in our country. According to present day standards the freely drawn and summarily brushed vistas we see in his portraits are infinitely superior to the rather stilted accuracy of these large canvases, but we should not forget that at the time they were painted a landscape proper in the manner of these vistas would certainly have been thought untrue to nature and to fact and therefore extremely unsatisfactory. An artist's accomplishment is generally so conditioned in a way upon the taste of his public.

Habitually addicted to drink and frequently for long periods I presume incapacitated thereby and unable to paint at all, his output is very limited as the product of almost thirty years of labor. He died of alcoholic poisoning, August 16, 1801, fifty years of age, at the home of Dr. Samuel Cooly in Bolton, Connecticut, where he lies today in an unmarked grave.

TWO UNPUBLISHED FRA ANGELICOS

BY FRANK JEWETT MATHER, JR.

Princeton, New Jersey

The Museum of Historic Art of Princeton University has had the good fortune to acquire two admirable little panels by the hand of Fra Angelico, and of his early period. The reproduction makes elaborate description superfluous. With their original mouldings the little panels measure .29 x .13 cm. The ground is a clay color, the background black, originally so. The Madonna's robe is an ineffable pale blue lapis, produced, I am sure, not by mixing with white, but by grinding the stone to the proper fineness. The bit of exposed lining is a cool yellow, the small visible area of the tunic, crimson. The mantle of St. John is of the same crimson similarly lined with an ochreish yellow. The condition is good, the Madonna's face a little rubbed—but since the effect depends on the superbly draped and drawn figure, small harm has been done.

Obviously we have to do with the shutters of a painted Crucifixion, the ground and background of which were the same as that of the shutters, the backs of which are painted in imitation of brown marble. The little triptych must have been most impressive.

These pictures are of the sort that least need certificates, but the certificates, from Dr. Gronau and Professor Suida are there. Both agree that the date is early, about that of the Coronation in the Louvre, 1425. Probably no one will disagree greatly with this dating, and the necessary comparisons may be made so easily that it seems superfluous to burden these pages with fortifying illustrations and discussion.

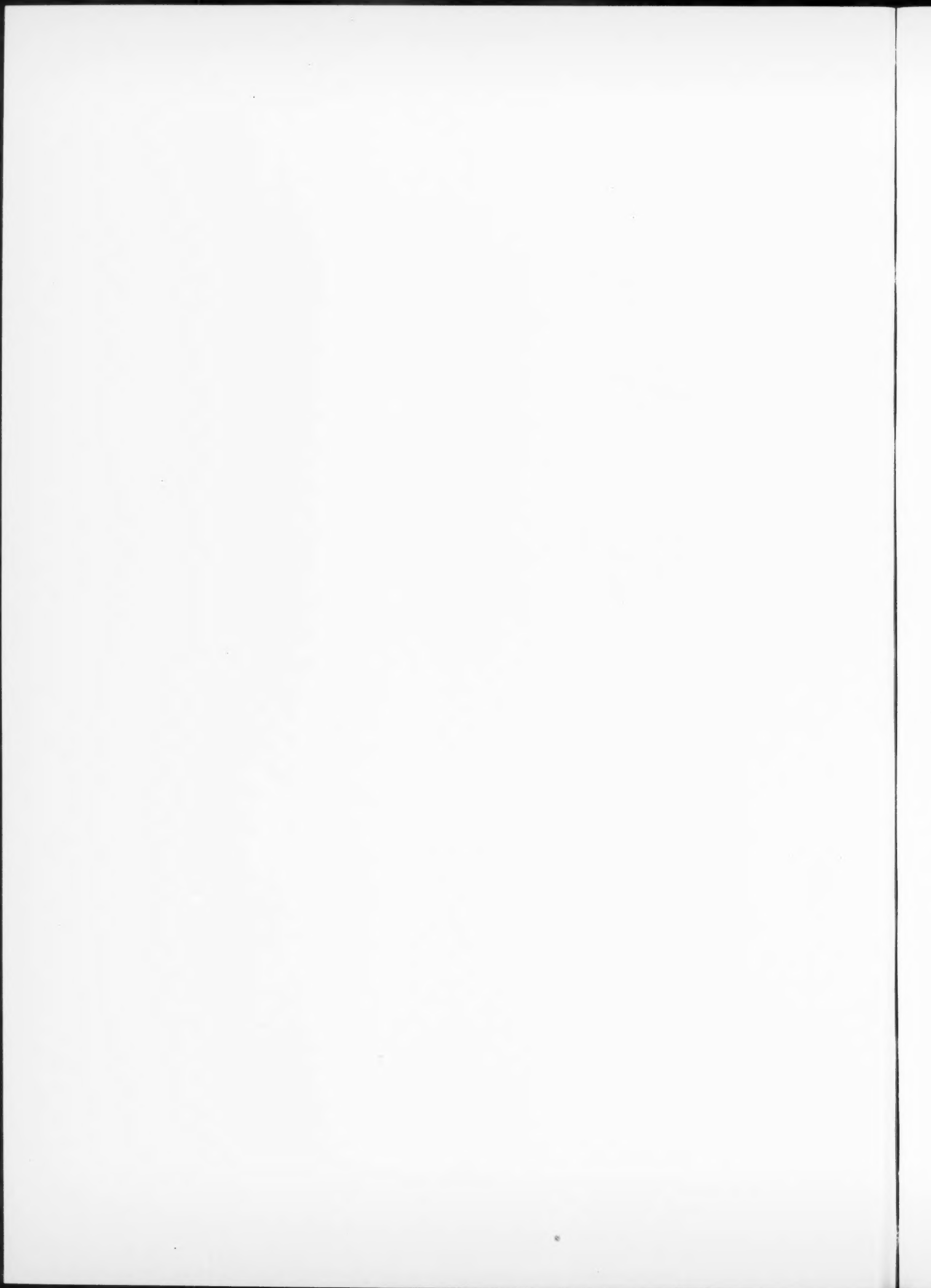
These little pictures suggest certain observations on Fra Angelico's development. Formally they are purely Florentine, and in a very plastic tradition. Such features as the monumental folds of the Madonna's drapery it is customary to refer to an early influence of Masaccio, as Fra Angelico's tender sentiment is often traced to some occult Siense inspiration. Errors both in my present opinion, though I have inclined to them myself in the past. What seems Siense in his reliquary pictures—and it is merely a question of the calligraphy of the bounding lines—is due to an analogous influence—that of French miniature painting. Formally the Madonna of the Star, as in her more mature phase in our Madonna at Princeton, is as Florentine as Giotto's great Madonna of Ognissanti. Whoever wishes to explain the statuesque cast of the drapery in both pictures, must go far behind Masaccio and study the Florentine sculptors from Andrea Pisano to Nanni di Banco. Futhermore the picto-



FRA ANGELICO: MADONNA AND ST. JOHN

The Museum of Historic Art, Princeton University, Princeton, N. J.





rial idiom of Fra Angelico throughout seems that of Orcagna and his successors of sculptural bent down to Starnina.

As for the tender sentiment of Fra Angelico, it is of course his own, and it is idle to trace it through Lorenzo Monaco to Siena. It may be noted that Lorenzo Monaco himself is wavering in this allegiance to the Sienese internationalism. He has a very Florentine phase—in the Bartolini Chapel, for instance, and it is mainly in this aspect that he can be regarded as a directive influence on Fra Angelico. Formally, to the end, Fra Angelico, remained a Florentine and a Gothic painter. He should be regarded not as a transitional painter, despite Mr. Douglas's ingenious plea to the contrary, but as the last and one of the greatest painters in the great line that starts with Giotto.

Such general remarks are prompted by long study of the Princeton Madonna which seems to me one of the noblest single figures from Fra Angelico's hand. In a minor way he is also Florentine. Witness the strained pose of St. John, as if suffering from a toothache. You will find it at Florence one hundred and fifteen years earlier, in a little triptych of Pacino di Buonaguida's school (see Offner, "Corpus", Vol. I.) which by an odd chance has also drifted to Princeton.

As for the date of the panels at Princeton, they are in every respect so near the Coronation, of about 1425, in the Louvre, that they cannot be more than a year or so away. If anything, I should set them rather earlier, for the silhouetting is still that of Lorenzo Monaco, whose influence Fra Angelico early outgrew.

A PAIR OF ANGELS BY FILIPPINO LIPPI

BY KATHARINE B. NEILSON

Norton, Massachusetts

A niche between the second and third left hand altars in the nave of Sant' Ambrogio in Florence, containing a wooden statue of Saint Sebastian, shows in the spandrels two flying angels painted in brownish monochrome. These and a badly damaged medallion of the Annunciation, on the frame below the statue, appear to be authentic work of Filippino Lippi.

The attribution to Filippino is not a new one, and has been questioned, when discussed at all, only by those critics who have suggested Raffaellino del Garbo, Filippino's closest follower, as the possible author. The earliest sources fail to mention the paintings, though the Saint Sebastian is referred to more than once; Vasari, in his life of Andrea Sansovino¹, says the sculptor was Lionardo del Tasso, a pupil of Andrea's. Richa² mistakenly attributed the statue to Andrea Comodi, but said nothing of the paintings. Milanesi, in his edition of Vasari, gives information about the Tasso family,³ and says⁴ "Sotto questa figura (i.e., the Saint Sebastian) e la seguente iscrizione: LEONARDVS TASSIVS CLEMENTIS F. (filius) D. (divi) HVIVS SEBASTIANI FICTOR, HIC CUM SVIS REQVIESCIT. ANNO SAL. 1500." Of this inscription I can find no trace today; it may have been covered up by the wooden panel let into the wall below the niche. Nevertheless, I see no reason to doubt that Milanesi, and presumably Vasari, actually saw it. The date, 1500, that of Lionardo's death, serves a useful purpose in providing a terminus ad quem for the paintings, which give every indication of having been executed at the same time as the sculpture.

Crowe and Cavalcaselle thought that both angels and Annunciation showed "Raffaellino's manner".⁵ Ulmann, in an article on Raffaellino del Garbo,⁶ cites this opinion but disagrees with it, calling the work

¹Vasari, *Vite*, le Monnier edition, Florence 1582, Vol. VIII, page 173—"Lionardo del Tasso fiorentino . . . fece in Santo Ambrogio de Firenze sopra la sua sepoltura un San Bastiano in legno." The burial place of the Tasso family in Sant' Ambrogio is marked by a stone in the floor below the Saint Sebastian, bearing the Tasso arms and the inscription: "FRANCIESCHO DI DOMENICHO DEL TASSO ET FILIORIB. A. D. MCCCCCLXX."

²Giuseppe Richa, *Notizie Istoriche delle Chiese Fiorentine*, Florence 1755, Vol. II. part 2, page 242. Andrea Comodi, a painter, lived 1560-1638; see Noack in Thieme-Becker, *Allgemeines Lexicon der Bildenden Kunstler*, Vol. VII, page 278. The attribution to Comodi was corrected in the Le Monnier edition of Vasari, Florence 1852, Vol. VIII, page 173, footnote 2.

³"Commentaria alla vita di Benedetto da Maiano", *Vite*, Florence 1878, vol. III, pages 347 ff.

⁴*Ibid.*, page 348, footnote 1.

⁵*A History of Painting in Italy*, edited by Langton Douglas, London 1911, vol. IV, page 304.

⁶*Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, Vol. XVII, 1894, page 107.

Filippino's. Berenson, in the earlier lists and in the new edition of 1932, attributes angels and Annunciation alike to Filippino,⁷ as do Venturi⁸ and, more recently, Van Marle.⁹ None of these critics give the paintings more than cursory notice.

The attribution to Raffaellino del Garbo is, I think, unwarranted. His is a convenient name to attach to pictures rather too poor in quality to be Filippino's; but even if one regards him as only one half of the Garbo-Carli personality, there is no reason for thinking that he was still clinging to his master's style seven or eight years after the completion of Cardinal Caraffa's chapel in Santa Maria Sopra Minerva in Rome.¹⁰ And, as I shall try to show, the paintings cannot be earlier than the very last years of the Quattrocento.

The tiny medallion of the Annunciation is such hasty work, and so badly damaged, that it is hard to say whether it shows Filippino's hand or that of an assistant. But if the former painted the angels it is unlikely that he asked an assistant to execute the medallion, which he could have finished himself in a very short time.

In the absence of documentary evidence for date and authorship, we must compare the Sant' Ambrogio angels with authentic works of Filippino's. So far as I know, he used the motif earliest in the altarpiece¹¹ done for the Palazzo della Signoria and dated February 20, 1485, (1486 new style), now in the Uffizi. This panel is painted in the fresh, naturalistic style of the '80's, the angels having the same sensitive delicacy of those in the Badia "Vision of Saint Bernard"; but the Sant' Ambrogio work corresponds closely to much later examples, of the time when Filippino's manner had assumed a tenseness and agitation almost Baroque, plus an ever-increasing mannerism in execution.

The most obvious parallel in this later period is the pair of angels, in brown monochrome, just below the window in Filippo Strozzi's chapel in Santa Maria Novella, filling out the spandrels above Benedetto da Maiano's Madonna over the tomb. In spite of minor differences in attitude and accessories, the hands, arms, and draperies are essentially like those in Sant' Ambrogio, and both certainly seem to have been done by a single painter at about the same date. Other close parallels, especially in the coarse lips and ill-drawn feet, occur in the Saints John

⁷*The Florentine Painters of the Renaissance*, all editions, and *Italian Pictures of the Renaissance*, Oxford 1932, page 285.

⁸Adolfo Venturi, *Storia dell' Arte Italiana*, Milan 1911, Vol. VIII, page 674, footnote 1.

⁹Raimond van Marle, *The Development of the Italian School of Painting*, 1929, Vol. XII, page 359.

¹⁰If, as is possible, Garbo, Carli, and Capponi were one and the same, the altarpiece in the Uffizi, signed RAPHAEL DE CAPONIBUS and dated 1500, makes it all the more unlikely that he could have painted anything like the Sant' Ambrogio angels at the close of the Quattrocento.

¹¹Madonna with Saints John the Baptist, Victor, Bernard, and Zenobius; No. 1568. A pair of angels hover above the Virgin's throne, holding a crown between them.

the Baptist and Magdalen of the Academy, Florence;¹² we see similar hands, wings, and drapery in Mr. Housman's Dead Christ with Angels.¹³ These three panels, though undated, belong stylistically to the late '90's.

On the strength of these analogies with authentic works of his, I conclude that Filippino himself painted the angels under discussion. That he did so after 1500 is virtually impossible, since Lionardo del Tasso died in that year, and they cannot be much earlier, on account of their likeness to the Strozzi frescoes, which were finished in 1502 though presumably under way in the late '90's. If not actually of 1500, the angels (and the Annunciation) should, I think, be dated not more than two years earlier, the same date being assumed for Lionardo del Tasso's Saint Sebastian. If this be correct, and if, as I think extremely probable, the Sant' Ambrogio work is contemporary with the east wall of the Strozzi Chapel, it might be taken as evidence that Filippino finished that wall not later than 1500.¹⁴ Inasmuch as Benedetto da Maiano's sculpture was completed even earlier (he died in 1497) it would not be surprising if Filippino undertook this wall first, in order to complete the setting of the tomb.

The attribution of the Sant' Ambrogio angels to Filippino on stylistic grounds is interestingly supported by evidence that he was a personal friend of the Tasso family, craftsmen noted especially for woodcarving and inlaid work. In 1486 Chimenti, or Clemente, del Tasso, a first cousin of Lionardo's,¹⁵ received 500 lire for the carved frame of Filippino's altarpiece for the Signoria¹⁶ referred to above. He was a member, with Filippino, of the committee chosen in 1504 to decide on the placing of Michelangelo's David,¹⁷ and in 1490 had been one of the judges in the competition for the new facade of the Duomo, for which Filippino entered a design.¹⁸

Vasari tells us that Filippino was always ready to oblige his friends. May we not guess that he painted the Sant' Ambrogio angels—surely too insignificant to represent a formal commission from a famous painter—simply as a favor to Lionardo del Tasso?

¹²Numbers 8653 and 8651. Berenson, in his *Italian Pictures of the Renaissance*, Oxford 1932, page 285, calls the Magdalen "Mary of Egypt", but I see no reason for such an identification.

¹³Formerly in the Benson Collection. A good reproduction is given in Lionello Venturi's *Pittura Italiana in America*, Milan 1931, plate CCIII.

¹⁴He received a payment for the frescoes on November 27, 1500; see Milanese-Vasari, *op. cit.*, page 471, footnote 1, also *Vita di Filippo Strozzi il Vecchio, scritta da Lorenzo Suo Figlio*, edited by Giuseppe Bini and Pietro Bigazzi, Florence 1851, which lists the earlier payments.

¹⁵For the Tasso family tree, see Milanese-Vasari, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, page 355.

¹⁶June 7, 1486, the date on which Filippino received the final instalment of the 1200 lire due him for the panel. See Gaye, *Carteggio Inedito*, Florence 1840, vol. I, pages 581-582; Vasari-Le Monnier, *op. cit.*, page 251, note 3; and Milanese-Vasari, *op. cit.*, page 474, note 2.

¹⁷Milanese-Vasari, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pages 348 and following.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, page 350. Benedetto da Maiano, who shares artistic honors with Filippino in the Strozzi Chapel, had the assistance of Tasso wood-carvers in the Palazzo della Signoria; see Milanese-Vasari, *op. cit.*, page 342.



FILIPPINO LIPPI: TWO ANGELS
Sant' Ambrogio, Florence

PAINTINGS BY CRANACH IN MINNEAPOLIS

By CHARLES L. KUHN

Cambridge, Massachusetts

In the public and private collections of the city of Minneapolis are four paintings by Lucas Cranach of considerable importance. This master is the only outstanding figure of the German Renaissance whose style in all of its vicissitudes is illustrated by American-owned works. Examples by Dürer in this country are rare and not of the highest quality. Holbein is represented as a portraitist only and, with few exceptions, his portraits are all of the late English period. American collectors, however, have assembled over eighty paintings by Cranach, of great variety and excellent quality. Those in Minneapolis alone illustrate many of the important phases of this master.

The earliest of the Minneapolis Cranachs was painted about 1510 but the artist's career had begun a full decade earlier with the stormy *Crucifixion* in the Benedictine Church of Vienna.¹ In this latter work he shows himself to be a true child of the German Late Gothic Baroque. The twisting, writhing, agonized forms on the cross, the fluttering, restless movement, the grim, tense faces of the spectators, and dark, threatening, over-cast sky, all reflect clearly the period of *Sturm und Drang*. Like that appalling vision of the *Crucifixion of the Isenheim Altar* by Matthias Grünewald, his early works are expressive of the troubled times in Germany when faith in church and state alike was floundering.

Cranach was born in the town of Kronach in Bavaria in 1472 and it is from the place of his birth that he derives his name. Little is known of his youth and training. Presumably he served his apprenticeship with his father who is said to have been a certain Hans Sunder and, as a journeyman painter, he may have traveled in the region of the Upper Danube. He first emerged from obscurity about 1500 when he appeared at Vienna as a designer of woodcuts for the leading publishers of that city. As early as 1505, however, he entered the services of Frederick the Wise, Duke of Saxony at Wittenberg, and except for a brief journey to the Netherlands he remained at the Saxon court until his death in 1553.

Cranach lived to see the city of Wittenberg transformed from a sleepy, semi-Slavic frontier village to a brilliant center of German culture. He saw the growth of the famous University of Wittenberg and was a close friend of its greatest lecturer, Martin Luther. He played

¹Reproduced in Max J. Friedländer and Jacob Rosenberg, *Die Gemälde von Lucas Cranach*, Berlin 1932, No. 1.

an important rôle in the transformation of this pioneer settlement, not only through his activities as a painter but also as a consultant architect, book illustrator, and costume designer. He must have had considerable influence in the formation of the famous ducal collection of paintings, many of which today are the prized possessions of the gallery at Dresden.

Numerous famous artists were called upon to enrich the palace and churches of Wittenberg—Albrecht Dürer, Jacopo dei Barbari, Michael Wolgemut, Hans Burgkmair, and Conrad Meit of Worms. Cranach alone, however, remained faithful to the ducal family, serving not only Frederick the Wise but also his two successors, John the Constant and Johann Friedrich. Indeed when Johann Friedrich was captured by the troops of Charles V and sentenced to death in 1550, the painter was at Augsburg during his master's trial and release.

Cranach's fortunes grew with the city and he rapidly became a wealthy and respected citizen. His name appears in the documents several times as a member of the city council and in 1537 he was elected burgomaster. His popularity as a painter increased rapidly and he received commissions from many members of the Saxon nobility. One of his greatest patrons was Albrecht of Brandenburg, Archbishop of Mainz, for whom he painted many portraits and altarpieces. He soon found it necessary to employ many assistants and for the last few years of his career, instead of exercising his own talents with the brush he seems to have been engaged largely in directing the activities of his helpers.

When Cranach settled in Wittenberg in 1505 the fresh, vigorous atmosphere of the city must have made a profound impression on him. Under the enlightened patronage of Frederick the Wise, his style soon changed from the unrestrained emotionalism of the Late Gothic to the calm intellectual balance of the Renaissance. The picture of *St. Margaret* in the Art Institute of Minneapolis (Fig. 1)² was painted shortly after the visit to the Netherlands in 1508-1509 had completed the transformation in his art. His contact with the Italianized Flemings of the north is clearly discernible in the work. The forms are no longer small and restless but are large in scale and monumental in design. There is a breadth and simplicity in the handling of the figure and an emphasis on the horizontal and vertical lines that show Cranach now to be a thorough classicist. The lower section of the picture has been cut away and with it has disappeared the dragon, the attribute of the saint, but even the loss of this fails to upset the architectonic balance of the

²Height, 36 inches; width, 25 inches.



FIG. 2. CRANACH: JUDITH WITH THE HEAD
OF HOLOFERNES
Collection of Mr. John R. Van Derlip,
Minneapolis, Minn.



FIG. 1. CRANACH: SAINT MARGARET
Minneapolis Institute of Art



FIG. 3. CRANACH: MADONNA AND CHILD
Collection of Mrs. Henschel V. Jones
Minneapolis, Minn.



design. The gay green dress and the red-violet cloak strike a cheerful note, very different from the sombre atmosphere of the earlier works.

As time goes on the luxurious life at the Saxon court at Wittenberg causes Cranach to forget his hard won classicism. Rich velvets, elaborate brocades and jewels interest him more than the monumental dignity of the design. The heavy, serious faces of his female figures that are well typified by the *St. Margaret* gradually change until his feminine type becomes one of soft mannered beauty.

This change is clearly seen in the second of our Minneapolis pictures, the *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* in the collection of Mr. John R. Vanderlip (Fig. 2).³ The simple rectilinear composition still suggests the classical phase of our master but the glowing high-lights of the red velvet dress, the heavy, twisted gold chains, the ornate embroidered borders of the costume show the court painter at work. This is no stern Old Testament Judith holding the severed head of her enemy. She is a fashionable lady of the court of Wittenberg, clad in her richest gown and posing for her portrait. The combination of simple design and elaborate accessories shows that the work was executed about 1520. The signature in the lower right-hand corner is of that type employed by Cranach from 1509 to 1536, the dragon with wings erect. The picture is one of a long series of portraits of court ladies, many of them represented as biblical characters, and ranging in date from about 1512 to the end of the artist's career.

The charming and in some respects trivial manner of painting that Cranach developed as a court artist immediately became popular with the people of wealth and fashion in Saxony. Commissions for altars, mythologies, religious works, and portraits flooded our painter. He soon found himself directing a large atelier in which scores of assistants were employed to multiply his designs. Numerous replicas of the more popular of his paintings were made in order to satisfy the growing market for his work. The assistants were so well trained in the master's manner and the formulae for the various types of pictures were so well established and stereotyped that there was very little falling off in quality in the work produced in the Cranach shop.

One of the most trusted of these assistants seems to have been the master's son, Lucas Cranach the Younger, whose hand may be discernible in the third of our Minneapolis pictures, the *Madonna and Child* in the collection of Mrs. Herschel V. Jones (Fig. 3).⁴ The work bears the Cranach signature in the lower left-hand corner, the dragon now with

³Height, 34 inches; width, 23 inches

⁴Height, 22 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches; width, 14 inches.

horizontal wings rather than with wings erect. This form of signature was employed from the year 1537 and the picture is an unusually attractive example of the Cranach style shortly after that date. All suggestion of the simple, sober classicism of the earlier works has disappeared and in its place we find a work of charming superficial loveliness, conforming to the dictates of court taste. Simplicity is supplanted by multiplicity. The former classic style is replaced by a twisting, dynamic treatment that is like the painting of the Rococo. The rounded forms of the grapes are repeated in the pudgy limbs and curly hair of the Christ Child, in the great puffed sleeves of the Virgin, and are echoed in the graceful rhythmic treatment of her golden locks. The great swinging curves of the mantel of the Madonna carry out the general restless movement. In spirit the work is as different from the classicism of the early sixteenth century as it is from Cranach's Late Gothic Baroque phase.

The latest of the Minneapolis pictures illustrates Cranach in a very dissimilar vein. The court of Wittenberg was far from being merely gay and superficial. In fact it played a very great rôle in the movement that was rendering Europe asunder at the time, the Reformation. Frederick the Wise was a Protestant sympathizer, the friend and protector of Martin Luther and it was due to his influence that Luther was called to teach at the University of Wittenberg. Frederick's successors, John the Constant and Johann Friedrich, were officially allied to the Protestant cause. Cranach himself was a Protestant and a close friend of the great reformer who stood as godfather to his daughter.

Cranach was acquainted with another of the great leaders of the Reformation, Philip Melancthon, whose portrait he painted more than once. It was undoubtedly the teachings of the great Protestant theologian that inspired the iconography in the painting of the *Fall and Redemption of Man* in the John R. Vanderlip collection (Fig. 4).⁵ The subject was painted as early as 1529 and was repeated many times by his followers.⁶ Although the Minneapolis example was executed as late as about 1550 by a none too talented pupil and is in a poor state of preservation, it clearly illustrates this didactic phase of our master. The figures are little more than puppets, small and insignificant, and are awkwardly rendered with a stylized seriousness that harks back to a much earlier art but they are characteristic of the mannered style of the late work of the Cranach school. In the foreground the fate of Adam is vividly depicted. Death and the Devil drive him into the flames of Hell while Moses and other prophets look on. The entire left portion

⁵Height, 7¼ inches; width, 9¾ inches.

⁶Max J. Friedländer and Jacob Rosenberg, *Die Gemälde von Lucas Cranach*, Berlin, 1932, No. 183.



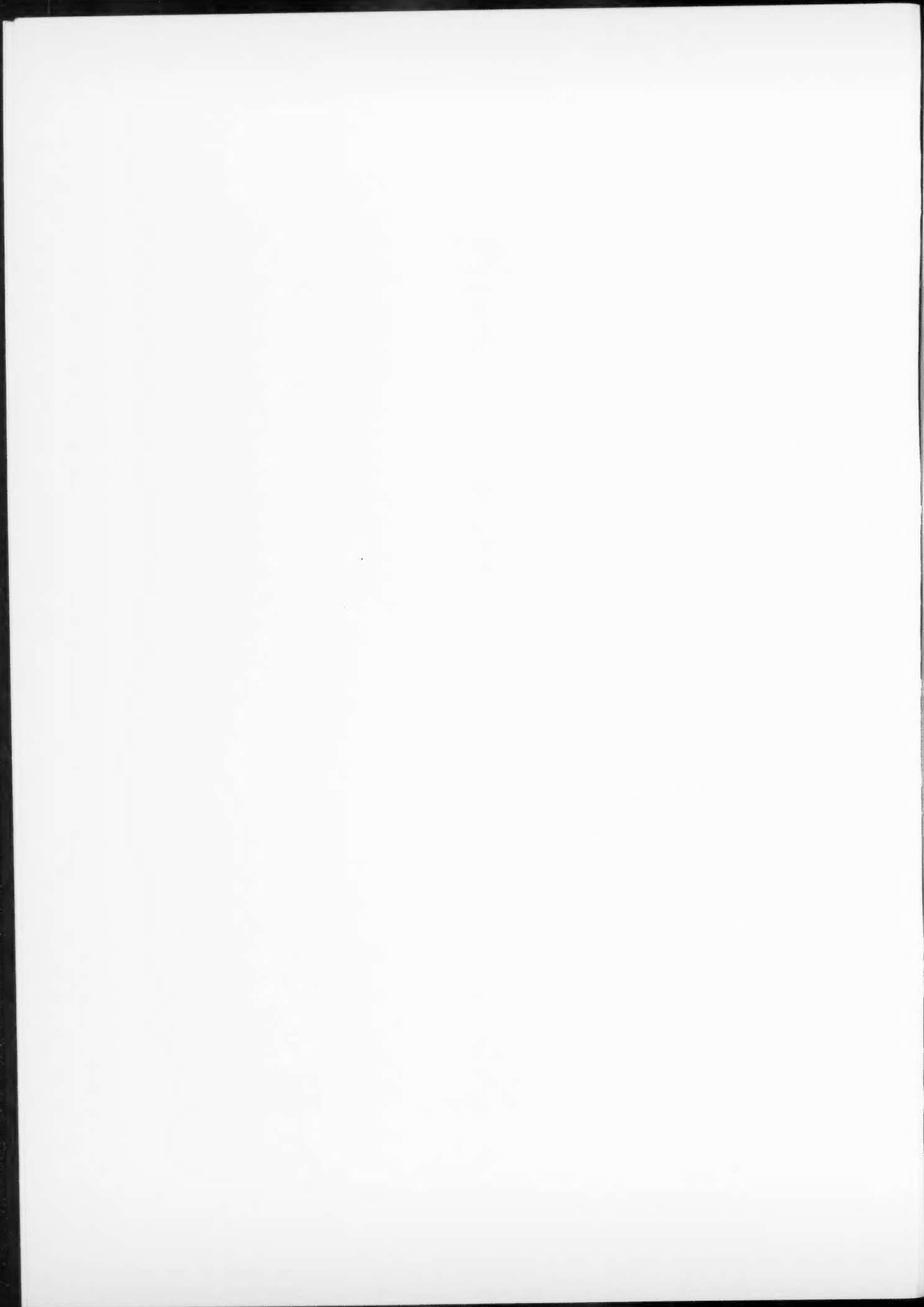
ADAM ET EVA
 PECCAVIT
 ET MORI
 CONDIGNUS
 FUIT

ECCE VII. DOMINVS
 IESVS DEDIT VOBIS
 SINGVLA. ECCE VIRGO
 CONCIPIT ET PARIET
 FILIVM.

HINC ENIM PECCAVIT / AGENS ATTEM MORIS / QUI DESERT VENTIS / PECCATA, POTENTIA / VIRGO PECCATI LEX / I-COR. XV. LEX ILLAM / OPERATA, / ROM. III. / PER LEGEM AGNITIO PIC- / QUI. ROM. III. OMNIS PRO- / PHERIA ET IESA LEX. VS. / QUI AD IOANNEM PRO- / PHETAM VENIT. / MATHEI. XXI. / NAM IN CHRISTO IESU. / NEQ. CIRCUMCISIO QUID / VALET. NEQ. PERPVITIM. / SED FIDES OPERANS P. / DIRECTIO. GAL. V. / ECCE AGENS ILLI DEI / QUITOQUIT PECCATA / MVNDI. IO. I. PER SANG. / TIFICACIONEM SPIRITVS / IN OBIEDIENTIAM ET AS- / PENSIONEM SANGVINIS / ABSORPTA EST. MARCI. VI. / TORIAM VBI TVAS BONA / AC VIVENS. VBI TVAS INFER- / TIFICACIONEM SPIRITVS / VICTORIAM. SED DISCORDIAM / PER DOMINUM.

FIG. 4. CRANACH: ALLEGORY OF THE FALL AND REDEMPTION OF MAN
 Collection of Mr. John R. Van Derlip, Minneapolis, Minn.





of the picture is symbolic of the Fall of Man. The section to the right symbolizes his redemption and here we enter the realm of the New Testament. John the Baptist guides the First Man to salvation and his sins are being cleansed by the blood of the Saviour. Nearby we see Christ conquering the powers of darkness and above is His resurrection. The theme of purification and redemption is repeated in the background by a young girl contemplating a cross in the sky, while above her is the explanatory text from Isaiah, "The Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son". Similar Latin quotations form the lower border of the painting.

The four Minneapolis pictures teach a remarkably clear lesson as to the effect that environment can have on a painter. The *St. Margaret* shows the artist suddenly plunged into a new atmosphere of intellectualism, plunged into the midst of a culture of foreign ideals that cause him to discard his native mediaevalism. The *Judith* represents a transitional phase when aristocratic patronage was undermining his interest in the new movement of Humanism. In the *Virgin and Child*, Cranach has succumbed to the dictates of fashion. The *Allegory of the Fall and Redemption of Man*, finally, illustrates him not as the emotional painter of the *Sturm und Drang*, not as a Renaissance artist pleased and proud of his new-found classicism, not as a gay and trivial portraitist at a fashionable court, but as a true and serious interpreter of the Reformation.

THE ETCHINGS OF CHARLES A. PLATT

Charles A. Platt etched water with the freedom of joy. We can almost hear its lapping and gurgling. It seems to swirl in behind ferry-boats in a free, big loose manner or it lies still and quiescent deep and cool around the hulls of boats that are tied up to their wharves. His rendering of other objects is sometimes almost too careful and painstaking. But when he etches water he lets his needle go, so that the work is both loose and suggestive. Whistler never made such water. He has etched with great feeling and sensitiveness the objects and especially the men, both in boats and on the shore; but the water itself, he generally avoided. But Mr. Platt's delight is in the water and he etches the other objects as merely its setting.

Then he looks up to the masts of the ships. He etches them as beautiful and delicate tracery, peculiarly graceful in their intertwining. He feels and tells us of the crowding together of the fishing-boats as though they needed company to fortify themselves against the loneliness of the sea.

But far in the distance is that hoped for, longed for line of the shore, just seen, so indistinct, so frail and yet so strong with interest. Sometimes there are boats in the distance, sometimes a city and sometimes merely a grassy shore. But it is far off and so simple and quiet off there in the distance.

Mr. Platt was born in New York City and was a prominent architect there. He began etching when very young and he was soon a member of both the New York Etching Club and the Society of Painter Etchers of London. A few of his plates were done in France and Italy but very many of them are of the waterfront with occasionally the skyline of New York as it was in the early eighties. Thus they have an historical interest. We see again the life of the ferry-boats before the tubes deprived them of their dignity and New York when its skyline might have been confused with that of any other city.

Etchings not in the catalogue of Mr. Platt's work by Richard A. Rice, '89.

The Isel, $7\frac{7}{8}$ " by 17".

Cape Ann Farm, $8\frac{3}{4}$ " by 12".

The Schooner, $9\frac{1}{8}$ " by $5\frac{3}{4}$ ".

Spring Floods, $12\frac{3}{4}$ " by $18\frac{1}{4}$ ".

The Charles River, $8\frac{1}{4}$ " by $14\frac{1}{2}$ ".

The Causeway, 8" by 13".

The Mountain, 10" by 7".